

**Memorandum of the Meeting
Regular Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Sixth Town Council of Highland
Monday, January 04, 2010**

The regular session of the Twenty-Sixth Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the plenary meeting chambers on **Monday, January 04, 2010** at the regular time of 7:07 o'clock p.m.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Mark Herak, Brian Novak, Konnie Kuiper and Dan Vassar were present. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

Also present: Peter T. Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief; William R. Timmer, CFOD, Fire Chief; Ed Dabrowski, Park and Recreation Board; Dan Stombaugh of the Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners; were also present.

Robin Carlascio of the Idea Factory, Newsletter Editor; and Mark Hadhazy, Administrative Director of Precise Ambulance Service, Dyer, Indiana; Gary Miller, CEO and Joe Merry, Operations Director of Prompt Ambulance Service; Ken Sink, General Manager Superior Ambulance; Thomas Dunn, Superior Ambulance Regional Manager; David Curtis, Superior Ambulance Vice President of Operations; and Denise Damore, Superior Ambulance; Station Manager, were also present.

General Substance of Matters Discussed

1. The Town Council and the Fire Chief discussed the current ambulance service as provided by Prompt Ambulance Service. The service is a no-fee service to The Town provided that the Town dispatches Prompt for all ambulance calls. The arrangement is aligned with an interlocal cooperation agreement with the Town of Munster. The contract expired in November 2009. The Town of Munster renewed under the contract terms for a three-year extension. The Town Council delayed consideration of this renewal at its meeting of December 29, 2009.

The Town Council discussed whether or not there were cost constraints built in to the contract. Councilor Herak asserted that an economy of scale should be achieved that would prevent a 5% increase in the Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support and transportation services.

The Fire Chief and the Police Chief spoke favorably of the service offered by Prompt Ambulance. It was noted that there were monthly meetings at the inception of the agreement. It was further noted that the advisory committee was amended out of the interlocal cooperation agreement, and meetings were less frequent. It was further noted in the last six months, quality assurance meetings resumed between the Town and Prompt Ambulance representatives.

The discussion included an issue regarding transport charges for round trip provided to Councilor Herak's mother for a visit to her Physician. Councilor Herak suggested that the trip involved a three-mile distance and was billed at approximately \$1,100. Mr. Merry from Prompt stated that Prompt's records showed a bill of approximately \$708 in that instance. Mr. Miller of Prompt noted that this was not a contracted call. Councilor Herak suggested that his mother was given fine care during the transport.

Mr. Merry from Prompt Ambulance stated that response times were averaged 2 minutes and 29 seconds for December 2009. It was also noted that it is policy that if there is no transport there is no charge to the patient for services. Mr. Miller provided a written report breaking out fees compared to the neighboring communities of Crown Point, Hammond, Hobart, Schererville, St. John, Superior and Prompt.

The Town Council discussed with representatives from Prompt the possibility to receive a rebate for the activities related to the services from the dispatchers. The discussion included the possibility of adding a \$25 fee for transports only. It was noted that the fee would be passed on to the patient. It was noted that Medicare has strict reimbursement rules that may not provide for the full payment of the fee. The discussion included a consideration of the method that Munster uses for dispatching. Munster transfers in-coming calls to the Prompt operators. It was noted that the Highland dispatcher takes the 911 call, and tracks elapsed time from dispatch to arrival. The disposition of the incident however is maintained by Prompt.

It was noted that if a Highland or Munster resident calls the emergency dispatch center, through the 911 gateway, Prompt is the ambulance provider. Residents are free to select non-emergency transport provider.

The discussion included the prospect of patient satisfaction surveys being instituted to be an added quality assurance measure. Mr. Miller suggested he was looking at a third party vendor to assist with providing such metrics and do so in such a way as to honor HIPPA privacy protections. It was noted that 100% of Griffith residents are surveyed pursuant to their agreement. It was also noted that Highland is only sampled.

The call volumes were reviewed for Griffith, Highland, Merrillville, Munster and Dyer. The 2009 Highland had 1,940 calls; Munster had 3,696 calls for 2007-2009; Merrillville had 8,041 calls for 2007-2009; Griffith had 2,893 calls for 2007-2009; and Dyer had 1,833 for 2007-2009.

Prompt representatives departed at this time.

Representatives from Superior Ambulance Service arrived at this time. They included Ken Sink, General Manager; Thomas Dunn, Regional Manager; David Curtis, Vice President of Operations; and Denise Damore, Station Manager.

Mr. Dunn offered a brief overview stating the history of the company. Mr. Dunn noted the special recognitions in paramedicine Superior possessed. Mr. Dunn noted that Superior is committed to transparency to the elected leadership and its commitment to patient care. Mr. Dunn emphasized Superior's character as an emergency medical service. He noted that Superior is one of three ambulance services invited to provide ambulance services for the recent U.S. Presidential Inauguration.

The discussion included seeking a timetable for Superior to respond with a fee for patient services package for the Town Council to review. It was suggested that a return proposal could be provided within a week.

The discussion included a discussion regarding the ways and means of ambulance service operations and the concern regarding out of pocket expenses to the residents. The discussion included an examination of Superior's methods of quality control. It was noted that there is a "360 degree style" internal review of services. This includes that 25% of all patients are sent a survey to receive feed back on customer service. Also, customer complaints or compliments are immediately sent to presidents and managers.

The discussion included whether or not Superior had the resources to perform ambulance services in the Town of Highland based upon the known call volume. Mr. Dunn of Superior stated that he believed that Superior had sufficient resources.

The discussion included the possible collection of a fee of \$25 that would come to the Town on transports. Councilor Herak also discussed what a hypothetical charge would be for patient transported from nursing home to a physician. It was noted that Medicare would not cover such a scenario. Mr. Dunn of Superior Ambulance also suggested that he could not offer a meaningful response as it is very individualized. The discussion also included an examination of what Superior is doing to remove costs in its operations. The discussion included a suggestion to reduce each year by 5% and then earn automatic renewal.

2. The Town Council discussed the pending boards and commissions appointments. It was noted that three new applications had been received this day reporting candidates' interest in serving on a board or commission. The discussion included whether or not there should be a cut-off time and whether or not there should be an added time for interviews. The discussion included a request from Councilor Novak to reschedule the Regular business meeting to accommodate his attendance. He noted that he has an unusual work conflict and asked that it be rescheduled. The Town Council discussed the possible rescheduling to Tuesday, January 12, 2010 with a 4:30 study session with a start time at 5:00 p.m.
3. The Town Council discussed the listed items on the agenda building report for consideration at the next plenary meeting of the Town Council. The discussion included matters still under consideration from the twenty-fifth Town Council session. The discussion included whether or not Seeberger Farms has been accepted as a subdivision by the Town. Councilor Herak would follow-up.

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council, of **Monday, January 04, 2010**, was adjourned 9:25 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA
Clerk-Treasurer